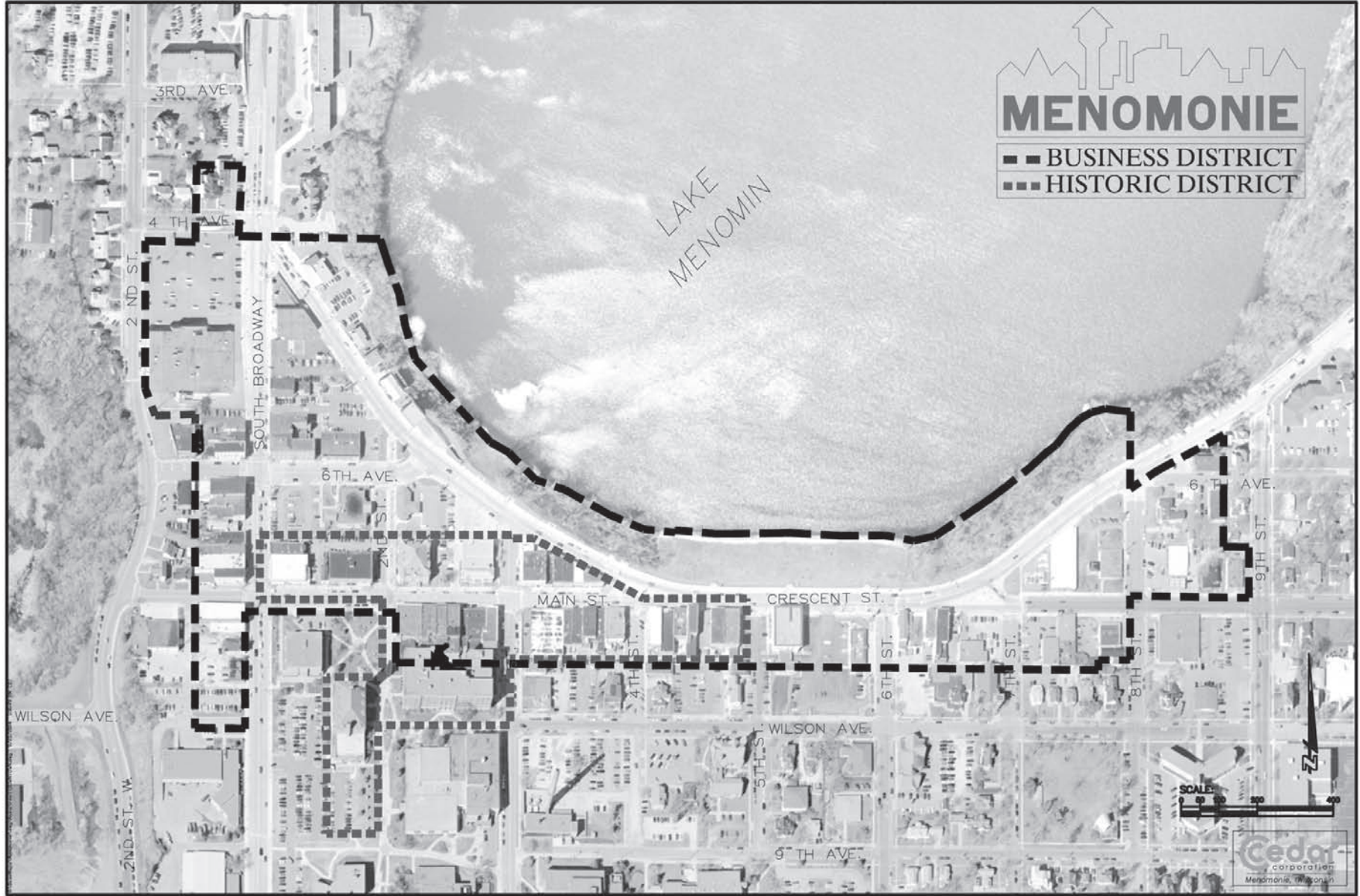




# Menomonie Historic Preservation Commission

*Design Guidelines for the  
Downtown Historic District  
and Other Historic Sites,  
Structures or Districts.*



# INTRODUCTION

## *Welcome to our Historic Downtown!*

*For more information, Contact*

Main Street of Menomonie, Inc.

Executive Director

342 Main Street East

Menomonie, WI 54751

715-235-2666

FAX: 715-235-2824



As you look through our historic guidelines, we hope that you find our suggestions and tips useful and beneficial. We are very proud of the fact that our historic downtown has been on the National Registry of Historic Places since July 14, 1986. If you are contemplating signage, signage change or a facade or exterior change, you are encouraged to stop in at the Main Street Office at 342 East Main Street and talk with the Executive Director of the Main Street program. As useful as we hope these guidelines and suggestions are to your decision making process, a conversation with the Main Street Executive Director could be very helpful also.

If you are a business or property owner within the Historic District of downtown Menomonie, the following information will guide you as you make decisions on signage, a signage change, or an exterior change on any exposed surface of your historic building, windows or paint choices. Within the boundaries of the historic district, any change to the exterior of a structure must first be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. Whether your project is something as simple as a sign or as complex as facade renovation, work cannot begin until a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued by the Commission. There is a daily penalty included in the ordinance for work done that has not received the proper approval. However; the goal of the Historic Preservation Commission is to work with you to make your project a success, not to be an obstacle for you.

The Preservation Commission is an arm of the government of the City of Menomonie. The Historic Preservation Commission was created by a city ordinance in 1994. This ordinance sets forth the rights and duties of property owners who own property that has either been designated as an historic site or historic structure or who own property within an historic district. A copy of the ordinances pertaining to the Historic District in particular and the Historic Preservation Commission in general can be obtained from the City Clerk at City Hall: 800 Wilson Avenue, Menomonie, WI. 54751, or from the Main Street office at 342 East Main Street.

# SIGNAGE

## *Planning for Signs*

Review the City of Menomonie Sign Ordinance to insure compliance with requirements and restrictions before investing money in a sign. For a projecting sign you must show proof of liability insurance for the building inspector of \$500,000 liability per projecting sign.

When planning the signage for your business, consider all signage whether it will be an exterior sign, window signs, store hours placement on the door or in the window, open/closed signage, neon signage in the windows or all of the above. The Historic Preservation Commission has jurisdiction on exterior signage within the Historic District of downtown Menomonie. All signage, interior or exterior, and whether you are within the Historic District or without, is under the jurisdiction of the City of Menomonie Building Inspector. The total signage per zone lot is based on building size.

If your business is outside of the Historic District of the downtown, you will receive all your signage permits through the City of Menomonie Building Inspectors office. However, if you are within the boundaries of the Historic District, it is recommended that you follow the steps below in the order mentioned:

1. As soon as your new location is confirmed, contact the Main Street Executive Director for a preliminary discussion on any exterior signage or facade issues. The Certificate of Appropriateness application and all signage applications can be obtained from the Main Street Executive Director at 342 East Main Street.
2. Once you have a design ready to go to the Historic Preservation Commission for approval, it could speed up the permit process to have a preliminary conversation with the Building Inspector's office to inform them of your plans for the building.
3. The Certificate of Appropriateness requires that along with the completed application, two (2) pictures of the exterior building elevations be taken perpendicular from the building. After the completion of your project, another set of exterior pictures are required to be taken. These pictures will stay in the possession of the City Clerk and City Attorney for documentation purposes. Applications and required pictures/drawings for your Certificate of Appropriateness must be turned in to the Main Street office no later than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the Historic Preservation Commission meeting. The Commission meets the second (2nd) Monday of each month at 5:00 PM on the third (3rd) floor of City Hall at 800 Wilson Avenue. Although your presence is not required at the Commission meeting, you are encouraged to attend. The Main Street Executive Director will assist you with the application process and will present your application to the Commission on your behalf, so it is imperative that you get your materials to the Main Street Executive Director and answer any questions in a timely manner.
4. Upon the issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness by the Commission, you will need to take the approved paperwork to the Building Inspector for the appropriate permits. The Building Inspector has a maximum of ten (10) days to do the required fieldwork and issue the permits for you to install your signage.



## *Exterior Signage*

Creating a sign that takes advantage of a building's own good design features is not complicated. Instead, it is a common sense process of evaluation that can be both enjoyable and economically rewarding. Signs are important to a store for reasons of advertising, identity and image. As they are an extremely visible element of the store front, signs must be used carefully so they do not detract from the building's facade. With a little forethought and careful planning, signage can embrace other store owner's needs and Downtown Menomoneie's historic image.

A new sign can help identify your business and its unique qualities. The difference that a positive image makes translates into dollars and cents at every business's cash register. In addition, signs play an important role in the appearance of a Downtown. The prominent locations and design characteristics of signs strongly influence people's perceptions of the district and its individual businesses. Well designed and properly maintained signs enhance the unique image of our Downtown area.

Begin your sign project by visiting the Main Street office. They will help you with sign colors and design, and other questions you may have about your sign. The Historic Preservation Commission has approved sign colors from Pittsburgh Paint Historic Colors and Benjamin Moore Historical Colors Collection. For accent (no more than 20 percent of the sign) T.J. Ronan colors have been approved.

You will receive a project application from the Main Street office. If your building's location is in the Historic District, your sign will have to be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission prior to erection. To qualify for the \$150.00 Sign Grant, your design will have to also be approved by the Main Street of Menomoneie, Inc. To apply for sign design assistance and a Main Street Sign Grant, contact the Main Street Inc. Executive Director and complete the application form.

## *Placement of an exterior sign*

The store front sign should be located above the storefront display windows but below the sills of second floor windows. On many examples of turn-of-the-century buildings, a continuous brick ledge or corbelling is used to separate the second floor and above from the store front below. This space is ideal for sign placement, as it was often created for this purpose. In some instances, newer buildings contain areas above the highest windows for signage. This location is acceptable but should be avoided if possible, as a great majority of Downtown Menomoneie's buildings were designed to accept signage above the display windows.



# SIGNAGE

Another option for a sign location can be an awning, provided the awning is properly integrated with the building. Other types of signage includes hanging signs, window signs or awnings that are located below the primary sign. If a projected sign is planned, placement will be critical to avoid interferences with adjacent signs and architecture of the storefront itself.

Projecting signs are a maximum of sixteen (16) square feet per sign face and can project a maximum of four (4) feet from the building wall. Projecting signs must be supported by a rigid frame with no guy wires allowed. These signs should be located so the bottoms are no less than nine (9) feet above the sidewalk and should project no more than four (4) feet. The size and location of a hanging sign should be carefully considered so that it does not interfere with neighboring signs. Window signs should not obscure the display area. The color of the letters should not contrast with the display background. Window signs should consist of a material and color that contrasts with the display while not covering more than 20 percent of the window area. Awning signs may occupy up to 20 percent of the awning area and are often an integral part of the awning pattern and style.



## Size

Big does not necessarily mean powerful. Store front signs of proper size can combine with the entire store front to become more meaningful than just the sign itself. The sign must be subordinate to the building and not the opposite.

## Lettering

Letter styles are numerous and vary tremendously. The store owner should have no problem finding a style representing the desired image. Letters also are available in many colors. Choose a color that compliments the building as well as contrasts with the background of the signboard. Light letters on a dark background provide the easiest reading. Because of the large variety of letters and letter types, it is recommended that a sign or advertising company be utilized.

## Message

Messages should be kept simple in content. The major function of the sign is to introduce the store front and its contents. Wording should be minimal, and slogans avoided. Descriptive words should be used rather than providing listings of items to be sold. Simple wording is easily read by pedestrians and street traffic without becoming distracting.





## *Illumination*

There shall not be back-lit signs with translucent panels or non-translucent panels (illuminated from the inside) within the Historic District. Pay close attention to the fixture used to illuminate your sign. These can be discreetly placed spotlights or a historically designed lamp placed above the sign. Neon signs may be used inside a window if it does not take up more than 20 percent of the window area. Neon is not permitted on the exterior of a building in the Historic District.

## *We recommend the following guidelines for business signs:*

- Use a simple clear message.
- Use colors, materials and lettering styles that harmonize with the building facade.
- Limit each sign to a maximum of three colors, two materials and one lettering style.
- Use available information about the colors, materials, lettering style and placement of the original signs on your building when designing new ones.
- Wooden signs with raised letters, painted signs, gold leaf and sandblasted signs are all appropriate Downtown, though not for every building.
- Scale signs and lettering to match the location.
- Use lettering that is eight (8) inches to eighteen (18) inches tall and occupies no more than 65 percent of the signboard surface or 20 percent of the window area.
- Small projecting signs, such as those that use an icon (a barber's pole or shoe, for example) and a minimal amount of lettering, are effective and attractive.
- When placed near the business entrance, these signs clearly identify the store's purpose and entrance for the pedestrian. When used by several stores along a block, small hanging signs provide a pleasing visual rhythm.
- Orient hanging signs toward pedestrians.
- Coordinate the size and placement of a hanging sign with its facade .

# AWNINGS

## *Awnings*

The canvas awning was an important design element in the traditional store front. It provides shelter for pedestrians from sun and rain, added color and acted as a transition between the store front and upper facade. The awning can also be used as a location for building signage.

If an awning is to be used, its shape should reinforce the frame of the store front opening. The awning should be attached below the store front cornice or sign panel and should not cover the piers on either side of the store front. The standard street-level awning should be mounted such that its valance is seven (7) feet six (6) inches above the sidewalk and it projects out half the sidewalk width.

The awning can also be a useful tool to disguise inappropriate store front alterations while maintaining the proportions of the traditional store front.

Awnings are available in several materials and colors of varying cost and durability. They also are available in a variety of profiles. However, the traditional commercial awning material is canvas and its profile is the watershed design. Other profiles tend to be too contemporary when placed on a traditional store front. Awning color should be selected to insure compatibility with your building and with the color of adjacent buildings.

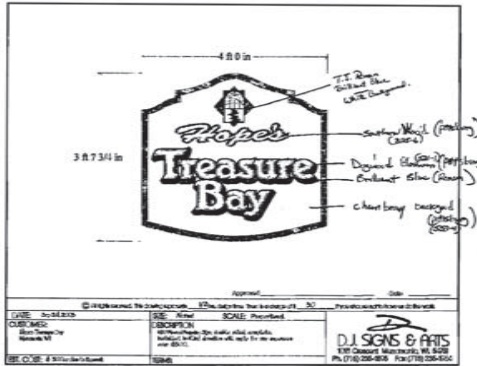


# FACADE DESIGN REVIEW

If you are considering doing an improvement project, the following steps should be followed:

## *Where to Start*

1. Determine the features that are significant to the character of your building. If the building has been significantly altered over the years, consider trying to find copies of historic photographs to get a better idea of how your building looked originally. These photos will help you to visualize the building and the assets that might still be salvaged. Photos can be found at the Dunn County Historical Society, UW-Stout Archives, or the Mabel Tainter Theater Archives
2. Determine the functional improvements that you wish to make to your building.
3. Determine the aesthetic improvements you wish to make to your building.
4. Identify maintenance and repair work that needs to be done.
5. Establish a budget for the total project.



Drawing of Sign



Finished Sign

## *Design Assistance*

1. Before you spend money on design drawings for your building, we encourage you to meet with Main Street Executive Director to discuss the overall scope of your project.
2. Depending on the complexity of the project and what you are trying to accomplish, the Main Street Program may be able to assist you. The Main Street Executive Director and Design Committee may be able to help gather information and give suggestions on appropriate designs and color schemes. If your project requires substantial demolition and reconstruction in order to renovate the building, the Main Street Executive Director will assist you in finding expertise in the areas needed.

## *Development of Detailed Plans*

1. All drawings should be done to scale.
2. Colors should be indicated where appropriate.
3. Indicate which elements are existing and are retained, which are to be altered and which are to be of new construction.
4. Furnish two (2) color photos of the existing building.
5. Send the plan to the Historic Preservation Commission for approval and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

# FACADE DESIGN REVIEW

## *Codes and Regulations*

Depending on the scope of your project, we recommend you check to see that your plans conform to local and state building codes and other regulations. In addition to meeting with the Main Street Executive Director, it is advisable to visit the Building Inspector's office where he/she or other members of the department can check the conformance of your plans with the following:

1. State and local zoning
2. Sign ordinance
3. Building and fire codes
4. Any other applicable regulations
5. Approval and Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission

## *Obtaining Permits and Approvals*

The City Building Inspector should perform the final review of the proposed plans for compliance with all applicable codes and regulations and issue any necessary permits.

## *Contracting the Work*

If you plan to hire a contractor to do the work, provide them with a copy of the design guidelines. If they have questions regarding the guidelines and need clarification, encourage them to contact the Main Street Executive Director. (Dumb questions are easier to handle and less costly than dumb mistakes!) Once, your project has been approved, any exterior changes will need to go back to the Commission for approval before the changes are made.

**Building Inspectors Office**  
800 Wilson Avenue  
715-232-2241

**City Clerk**  
800 Wilson  
715-232-2180

**City Attorney's Office**  
Schofield & Higley, SC  
700 Wolske Bay Rd.  
715-235-3939

**Executive Director,  
Main Street of Menomonie**  
342 East Main Street  
715-235-2666  
mastmen@wwt.net

# Q

## *Frequently Asked Questions:*

### **1. What exterior alterations do I need to get approved?**

If your building is in the historic district, any work done on the exterior of the building that can be seen from street level including the roof line must be approved prior to work beginning.

### **2. Do I need approval on work in the back of the building that people can't see?**

Whether people can access the rear of the building or not, it still needs to be approved. Exterior means front, back and both sides including roof line.

### **3. Do I need to get the color of paint approved if I'm painting with the exact same color?**

Yes, even if you are using the same color.

### **4. Do I need approval to replace windows?**

Yes.

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# A

December, 1998  
November 2004